

# PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN

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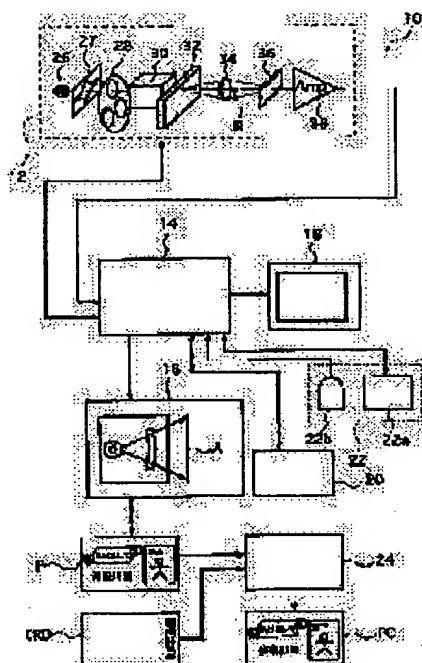
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## (54) CHARACTER AND IMAGE COMPOSING METHOD

### (57)Abstract:

**PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED:** To secure the appearance of characters in accordance with the preference of customers by outputting a composite print image where the appearance of characters is adjusted to the color of a background image.

**SOLUTION:** A digital print system 10 consists of an image input device 12, a controller 14, an image output device 16, a display device (display monitor) 18, a storage 20, a data input device 22 and a pasting machine 24. When a digital synthetic image data are generated, each color value of three primary color digital character image data obtained by expanding a character image into a bit map is adjusted to each color value of three primary color digital background image data. This adjustment of color value is desirably carried out by setting at least one of upper and lower limit value of each color. It is also desirable to normalize the adjustment and conversion of each color value of three primary color digital character image data based on the set upper and/or lower limit value of each color.



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5 [What is Claimed is:]

[Claim 1] A character and image composition method characterized in that, in generating a digital composite image data for outputting a print image in which characters are composited with an image, the value of each color of the three primary colors digital character image data obtained by bitmap development of a character image is adjusted with respect to the value of each color of the three primary color digital background image data.

15 [Claim 2] The character and image composition method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the adjustment of the value of each color of said three primary colors digital character image data is performed by setting at least one of the maximum value and minimum value of said each color.

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[Claim 3] The character and image composition method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the adjustment conversion of the value of each color of said three primary colors digital character image data is a process for normalizing with the set maximum value and/or minimum value of said each color.

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[Claim 4] The character and image composition method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the adjustment conversion of the value of each color of said three primary colors digital character image data is shown by the following equation, if said digital character image data is defined as n1 bit data, the maximum and minimum values set for each color of R, G and B of said digital character image data are M<sub>cmax</sub> and M<sub>cmin</sub> (c = r, g and b), the value of a gray scale character image data before conversion is M, the value of the character image data of each color after the conversion which is adjusted the color balance is M<sub>ic</sub> (c = r, g and b).

$$M_{ic} = (M_{cmax} - M_{cmin}) \times M / \{(2^{n1} - 1) - 0\} + M_{cmin}$$

15 [Claim 5] The character and image composition method as claimed in claims 2 to 4, wherein, if said characters are black characters, the maximum value of the image data of the three primary colors digital background image which is composited with the characters, the minimum value thereof, or both of them are adjusted.

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[Claim 6] The character and image composition method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the adjustment conversion of the value of each color of said background image data is a process for normalizing with the maximum value and/or minimum value

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set for said each color.

[Claim 7] The character and image composition method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the adjustment conversion of the value of each color of said background image data is expressed with the following equation, if said background image data is defined as n1 bit data, the maximum and minimum values set for each color of R, G and B of said background image data are  $I_{cmax}$  and  $I_{cmin}$  (c = r, g and b), the value of said background image data before conversion is  $I_c$  (c = r, g and b), the value of the character image data of each color after the conversion is  $I_{lc}$  (c = r, g and b).

$$I_{lc} = (I_{cmax} - I_{cmin}) \times I_c / ((2^{n1} - 1) - 0) + I_{cmin}$$

15 [Detailed Description of the Invention]

[Field of the Invention]

The present invention relates to a character and image compositing method for compositing characters, such as an address, name or free sentence, with a background image, such as an image prepared in advance or an image read from a film document, in a print image of a digital document or image, such as a postcard.

[Prior Arts]

25 Various post cards with a picture image, that is,

postcards, in which a print image generated by compositing characters with a picture image and the like is provided on a New Year greeting postcard or government-printed postcard, are used as New Year's cards, marriage cards and the like. To make these postcards, characters, such as an address, name, free sentence or other stereotyped sentence, should be printed before printing a customer's (user's) negative film or positive film with an image mask. Accordingly, printing on another film, such as a lith film, with the image mask should be performed after printing the characters as a block copy document. In the case of, for example, New Year's cards, a stereotyped image (template image, mount image), such as "pine branches for the New Year", should be printed as a background image with the image mask. Thus, to make conventional postcards, at least three films, that is, a lith film for characters, a film for the user image and a film for the stereotyped image, are necessary for each case. These three films are set for each case, the three films set as one set are mounted on a conventional analog printer, and the composite image of characters and images formed by the set three films are directly printed on a photosensitive material (paper) with the image mask by surface exposure for the time required, thereby a required number of prints, for example, 50, 100, 200 or 1000 composite images are printed. The required number of print images obtained in the way as described above

are cut one by one after development, and each one is attached on a postcard, a mount or the like, such as a government-printed postcard or a non-government-printed postcard, using an attaching machine for exclusive use, so as to make the postcards.

Since a specific character is sometimes used for the address, name and the like, fine difference is required even for similar characters, and thus correction is often required. However, in conventional analog printers, a lith film only for characters should be formed by performing generation of a block copy, exposure and development for each case, and thus it is difficult and troublesome to make correction. Further, the composite image is obtained by setting the three films of characters, a user image and a stereotyped image as one set.

However, for example, as New Year's cards, a lot of cases should be dealt for a short time of the end of a year. Many popular stereotyped images for the mount image should be prepared, or some stereotyped images should be rearranged one after another. As a result, error of the rearrangement possibly occurs, which causes the increase of costs. To form an image window of the user image in various shapes, multi-printing should be performed with the image mask. However, the problem is that the multi-printing is extremely hard to perform.

Recently, a printing system utilizing digital exposure,

that is, the digital print system is proposed in which the image information recorded on the picture film document (film document, herein after), such as a negative film or reversal film, is read elector-optically, and the read image is converted to a digital signal to perform various image

processes to generate image information for recording, and the photosensitive material such as printing paper is scanned and exposed with a recording light modulated in accordance with the aforesaid image information to record an image (latent image). And digital photo-printers performing this system concretely is developed.

In the digital print system, edition of a print image, such as edition like composition of a plurality of images or division of an image, and edition of characters and an image, and various image processing, such as layout, color/density adjustment, variable magnification or accented outline, are freely performed. Accordingly, finished print performed edition and image processing is able to be freely outputted in accordance with purposes. A conventional print system by direct exposure cannot completely reproduce the image density information recorded on a film and the like, from the point of density resolution ability, space resolution ability, color/density reproducibility and the like, while a digital photo-printer is able to output a print reproducing the image density information recorded on a film substantially

completely. A digital photo-print system and digital photo-printer basically have an image input device (scanner) for photoelectrically reading an image recorded on a document, such as a film, by an image sensor and the like, a display device (display) for displaying the read image or a composite image obtained by compositing the read image with a stereotyped image, an input device for inputting characters of an address, name, free sentence and the like as well as various numbers and conditions. The digital photo-print system and digital photo-printer is also constituted with a control device for controlling the whole system, an image processing device for performing image process of a read image or compositing the read image with a stereotyped image or characters, such as an address and name, and an image output device for obtaining a print performed developing process by scanning and exposing a photosensitive material with a exposure beam, such as a modulated laser beam, in accordance with the image information performed image processing.

According to such a digital print system, in the image processing device, images photographed on each film, stereotyped images, such as a mount image (template image), digital image data performed bitmap development, such as stereotyped sentences, and image processing conditions thereof are able to be stored and reserved in an internal memory formed of a non-volatile memory such as an EEPROM or EPROM, an

external memory such as a HD (hard disk), or a storing medium such as a FD (floppy disk) or MO (optical magnetic recording medium). Accordingly, a stereotyped image and stereotyped sentence should not be formed for each case in forming postcards or the like. Further, the display device displays a composite image obtained by compositing the read image read from a film document of a user with a stereotyped image such as a template image and a character image such as an address, name, free sentence or stereotyped sentence. Accordingly, modification and correction are able to be performed easily and accurately. Since once the composite image data is formed, the image output device using laser light and the like is able to output a required number of prints automatically and sequentially, postcards are formed easily, accurately and efficiently.

#### [Subjects To Be Solved By the Invention]

In forming postcards using this digital print system, postcards in which characters are composited with an image requires to form a color image, even characters such as an address or name are often formed in black. In a postcard, used is a color photosensitive material having an emulsion layer for coloring the three primary colors, red (R), green (G) and blue (B), by exposure and development with three laser beams of different narrow-band wavelength. Accordingly, how the

black characters appear is influenced by the hue of the background image with which the black characters are composited. For example, though the three primary colors are balanced with a black level in which the exposure amount of laser light for coloring each color of R, G and B is a maximum value, for example,  $R, G, B = (0, 0, 0)$  in 8 bit digital value, so as to color clear black, the problem is that the black characters appear not clear black but including some color depending on the hue of the background. Since reddish black characters are disliked in postcards, laboratories has a strong demand to finish the black characters to be a little bluish. In the black level of  $R, G, B = (0, 0, 0)$ , the power of laser light is so strong that it is saturated, and as a result, black characters are blurred.

The present invention aims to solve the problems of the aforementioned conventional arts, and to provide a character and image compositing method which is able to adjust how the color of characters appears in accordance with the hue of a background image, in such a way wherein the appearance of the color of the characters is never influenced by the hue of the background to be composited with the characters, never becomes reddish and is finished to be rather bluish even in forming postcards having a print image composited characters with an image using a digital photo-printer of a digital printing system.

[Means for Solving the Subjects]

To accomplish the aforesaid objects, the present invention provides a character and image composition method characterized in that, in generating a digital composite image data for outputting a print image in which characters are composited with an image, the value of each color of the three primary colors digital character image data obtained by bitmap development of a character image is adjusted with respect to the value of each color of the three primary color digital background image data.

The adjustment of the value of each color of the three primary colors digital character image data is performed by setting at least one of the maximum value and minimum value of the each color. The adjustment conversion of the value of each color of the three primary colors digital character image data is a process for normalizing with the set maximum value and/or minimum value of the each color.

The adjustment conversion of the value of each color of the three primary colors digital character image data is shown by the following equation, if the digital character image data is defined as n1 bit data, the maximum and minimum values set for each color of R, G and B of the digital character image data are  $M_{\max}$  and  $M_{\min}$  ( $c = r, g$  and  $b$ ), the value of a gray scale character image data before conversion is  $M$ , the value

of the character image data of each color after the conversion which is adjusted the color balance is  $M_{ic}$  ( $c = r, g$  and  $b$ ).

$$M_{ic} = (M_{cmax} - M_{cmin}) \times M / ((2^n - 1) - 0) + M_{cmin}$$

If the characters are black characters, the maximum value of the image data of the three primary colors digital background image which is composited with the characters, the minimum value thereof, or both of them are adjusted.

The adjustment conversion of the value of each color of the background image data is a process for normalizing with the maximum value and/or minimum value set for the each color.

The adjustment conversion of the value of each color of the background image data is expressed with the following equation, if the background image data is defined as  $n1$  bit data, the maximum and minimum values set for each color of  $R, G$  and  $B$  of the background image data are  $I_{cmax}$  and  $I_{cmin}$  ( $c = r, g$  and  $b$ ), the value of the background image data before conversion is  $I_c$  ( $c = r, g$  and  $b$ ), the value of the character image data of each color after the conversion is  $I_{ic}$  ( $c = r, g$  and  $b$ ).

$$I_{ic} = (I_{cmax} - I_{cmin}) \times I_c / ((2^n - 1) - 0) + I_{cmin}$$

[Preferred Embodiments of the Invention]

A character and image compositing method relating to the present invention is described in detail based on a preferred embodiment shown in the appended drawings. Fig. 1 is a

schematic illustration showing with a block diagram an embodiment of the digital printing system performing the character and image compositing method of the present invention. In the following description, as a typical example of the object to which the character and image compositing method of the present invention is performed, a postcard is shown which is formed by compositing a photographed image by a customer, a background image having a design associated with the New Year, and characters, such as stereotyped characters and a sentence like "New Year's Greetings" or "A Happy New Year!", or the address, name and free sentence of the customer. However, the present invention is not limited thereto, and is able to properly select the object in accordance with objected use or purpose.

A digital printing system 10 shown in Fig. 1 includes an image input device (also called "scanner", hereinafter) 12 for photo-electrically reading the image of a film document brought by a customer; a control device 14 for setting reading conditions of the scanner 12, controlling the scanner 12 based on the conditions, transforming the image signal read by the scanner 12 to a digital image signal, performing the image process thereof, compositing the read image, and a background image designated by the customer with characters, such as stereotyped characters or sentence designated by the customer, or the address, name, free sentence and the like of the

customer, as a digital image signal, performing the image process of the composited digital composite image signal, setting the conditions of the composite process, and automatically setting the conditions of the image process (auto-setup); an image output device (also called "printer", hereinafter) 16 for performing image exposure on a photosensitive material based on the digital composite image signal which is performed composite process by the control device 14, and performing development process to output print p bearing the composite image; an image display device (also called "monitor", hereinafter) 18 for displaying the document image read by the scanner 12 or the composite image performed composite process by the control device 14, and displaying the area of the image outputted from the printer 16 (finished print area); a storing device 20 including a server or HD, or a magnetic recording medium such as an MO (optical magnetic recording medium), magnetic tape or FD, and a driver thereof, for storing each digital image signal before composition process about the background image in accordance with the purpose of a prepared postcard PC, the character image obtained by performing bitmap development to the stereotyped sentence and the address, name and free sentence of the customer which are composited with the background image, and the document image read by the scanner 12, for storing digital composite image signal which is processed by the control

device 14 or used by the printer 16, and for storing the composite process conditions, image process conditions and exposure conditions of the digital image as well as the process conditions of the photosensitive material; a data input device 22, such as a keyboard 22a or a mouse 22b, for inputting the address, name, free sentence and the like of the customer, selecting or designating the background image or stereotyped sentence by the customer, setting various conditions, selecting processes, and inputting information such as correction; and an attaching machine 24 for forming postcards PC by attaching the character and image composite print outputted from the printer 16 on a mount CRD such as New Year's cards or standard cards.

The scanner 12 photo-electrically reads the image in one frame photographed on a film document (called "film", hereinafter) and the like, and includes a light source 26, a variable diaphragm 27, three color filters of R, G and B for resolving an image into the three primary colors, R (red), G (green) and B (blue), a color filter plate 28 for operating an optional color filter into a light path by rotation, a diffusion box 30 for uniformly diffusing reading light incident on the film in the direction of the surface of the film perpendicular to the optical axis, a film carrier 32 (carrier 32, hereinafter) for sequentially carrying the film to a predetermined reading position Z for each frame, an image



forming lens unit 34, a CCD sensor 36 which is an area sensor for reading the image of one frame of the film, and an amplifier 38.

In this scanner 12, the reading light, which is emitted from the light source 26, performed adjustment of the light amount by the variable diaphragm 27, performed color adjustment through the color filter plate 28, and diffused by the diffusion box 30, incidents on and penetrates the image of one of the frames of the film positioned in the reading position Z corresponding to the optical axis R by the carrier 32, thereby projection light bearing the image of the one frame photographed on the film is able to be obtained. In the digital printing system (just "printing system", hereinafter) 10 of the illustrated example, the carrier 32 is detachably mounted in a predetermined position of the body of the scanner 12. In the illustrated example, a special carrier detachably mounted on the body of the scanner 12 is prepared in accordance with the kind and size of the film, the film type, such as a slide film, and the process, such as trimming. By changing the mounted carrier, reading is able to be performed corresponding to various kinds and processes of the film, such as a conventional 135mm size or 240 size negative film, a reversal film or a slide film.

The projection light of the film is imaged on the light receiving surface of the CCD sensor 36 by the image forming

lens unit 34, and read photo-electrically by the CCD sensor 36, and the output signal therefrom is amplified by the amplifier 38 and sent to the control device 14. The CCD sensor 36 is, for example, an area CCD sensor of 1380 X 920 pixels. In the device of the illustrated example, the CCD sensor 36 is arranged two-dimensionally movably an amount corresponding to a half-pixel in the direction of the arrangement of pixels, thereby the number of the reading pixels is able to be increased up to four times in appearance.

By performing the aforesaid image reading three times inserting each color filter of the color filter plate 28 sequentially, the scanner 12 reads the image of one frame resolving to the three primary colors R, G and B. Before the image reading for outputting the character composite image print P (main scan), the printing system 10 performs pre-scan reading an image with low resolution, so as to adjust the composite result of characters with the read image, to display the composite image, especially the read image, and to decide the image processing conditions and the like. Accordingly, reading by the CCD sensor 36 is performed at least six times for the image of one frame.

The image data read by the scanner 12 in this way is outputted to the control device 14. A block diagram showing an example of the control device 14 is shown in Fig. 2. As shown in the same figure, the control device 14 has the image

processing part 15 for generating the composite image data in which characters are composited with an image, which is the point of the present invention, a CPU 40 for not only controlling the image processing part but also controlling and administering the printing system 10 including the scanner 12, the control device 14 itself and the printer 16, and a memory 42 for storing the data necessary for operating the printing system 10. The image display device for displaying the composite image ("monitor" or "display", hereinafter) 18, the keyboard 22a for inputting characters or the like, such as the address, name or free sentence of a customer, the mouse 22b for, for example, designating the background image or stereotyped sentence selected by a customer (or a designation mark such as a code number may be inputted with the keyboard 22a), the printer 16 and the like are connected to each part via a CPU (CPU bus) or the like.

The image processing part 15 has an A/D converter 43, an image pre-processing part 44, a read image memory (frame memory) 46 including a pre-scan (frame) memory 46a and a main scan (frame) memory 46b, an image processing part 48, a composite processing part 50, a D/A converter 51, a character image data generating part 52, and a background image (template image) memory 54. The A/D converter 43 converts each image data of R, G and B outputted from the scanner 12 into digital image data. The pre-processing part 44 performs to the

obtained digital data various conversion and correction process, such as DC offset correction, bright state correction, Log conversion, shading correction or negative/positive conversion, as the occasion demands. The read image memory (frame memory) 46 stores the pre-processing image signal data obtained in this way. Among the pre-processing image signal data, the pre-scan image data and the main scan image data are stored in the pre-scan memory 46a and the main scan memory 46b, respectively. Though the frame memory 46 may be mounted in the control device 14, a part of the storing device 20 may be used as the frame memory 46. The negative/positive conversion performed in the image pre-processing part 44 converts a negative image read from a negative film into a positive image read from a reversal film, or converts a positive image into a negative image.

The image processing part 48 sets the processing conditions of the obtained image data (image processing conditions), and at the same time, performs the image process to the image data in accordance with the set image processing conditions. In the image processing part 48, the pre-scan image data is read out from the pre-scan memory 46a at first, formation of a density histogram and calculation of the amount of image characteristic and the like are performed, and various image processing conditions, such as color/gradation correction, electronic magnification, dynamic range process,

or sharpness, are set.

When the image processing conditions are set in this way, the image processing part 48 performs to the pre-scan image data, or to the main scan image data read from the main scan memory 46b in main scanning, as the need arises, crosswise rotation of the image ( $-90^\circ$  or  $90^\circ$ ), reverse rotation ( $\pm 180^\circ$ ) or rotation of an optional angle ( $\pm \theta$ ), correction of the color and/or gradation of the image, enlargement/reduction process of the image (electronic variable power) in accordance with

5 the set electronic magnification, compression and/or expansion of the dynamic range of image data (adding cover print effect and the like by the image processing), and sharpness process with an unsharpness mask or the like. The pre-scan image processed in accordance with the image processing conditions

15 set by the image processing part 48 is composited with characters and background image (template image) in the composite processing part 50 described in the following paragraph, and then displayed on the monitor 18, such as a CRT, as a composite image. However, an operator may watch the pre-scan image in the displayed composite image and perform an examination, color/density adjustment, gradation adjustment and the like, so as to correct the image processing conditions set for the pre-scan image.

The character and image data generating part 52 is one

of the parts performing the character and image compositing method of the present invention, and performs bitmap development of the character data, such as the address, name or free sentences of a customer, which is inputted with the

5 keyboard 22a through the CPU 40 and the memory 42, so as to generate bitmap image data. The background image memory 54 stores the digital image data of a plurality kinds of background images (template image or mount image) and the bitmap image data of a plurality kinds of stereotyped

10 characters and sentences, which are prepared in the printing system 10 in advance in accordance with the use of the postcards. These background image data and the bitmap image data of the stereotyped characters and sentences are able to be read out from the background image memory 54 by the CPU 40,

15 with the designation by an operator using the data input device 22. The frame memory 46 may be mounted in the control device 14, and may be assigned as a part of the storing device 20.

A customer is able to freely choose the background image, stereotyped characters and stereotyped sentences among a plurality of kinds in ordering postcards. Designation of the background image, stereotyped characters and stereotyped sentences by an operator may be performed by displaying designation marks, such as code numbers of a plurality kinds

25 of the background images, stereotyped characters, stereotyped

sentences and the character font thereof, on the monitor 18 to designate the designation number of the background image, stereotyped characters, stereotyped sentences, which is selected by the customer in ordering, among the designation numbers displayed on the monitor 18 using the mouse 22b. Or, the designation marks of the background image, stereotyped characters and stereotyped sentences may be inputted with the keyboard 22a. It is preferable that a background image, characters, sentences, the font thereof and the like which are not prepared in advance are formed using a photo-retouch software, such as a Photoshop (produced by Adobe Co.), and converted into image data or bitmap developing data so as to be newly added to the background image memory 54.

The composition processing part 50 is one of the parts performing the character and image composite method of the present invention, and composites the image data outputted from the image processing part 48 and the bitmap character and image data outputted from the character and image data generating part 52 with the bitmap image data of the background and characters read from the background image memory via the CPU 40. The character and image composite method performed by the composition processing part 50 and the character and image data generating part 52 is described in detail later. In the composition processing part 50, if the image data outputted from the image processing part 48 is the

main scan image data, the image data in which characters are composited with an image is stored in the memory 42 or the storing device 20, or directly outputted to the printer 16. If the outputted image data is the image data in the video mode for sequentially reading the images of the customer's film in monochrome and displaying them on the monitor 18, or the pre-scan image data, the image data is converted to the image data of the resolution and form corresponding to the display method of the monitor 18 (device dependent image data), and is converted from the digital image data signal to the analog image data signal in the D/A converter 51, to be outputted to the monitor 18. The monitor 18 displays the image generated by compositing characters with an image based on the analog image data signal obtained in the aforementioned way.

The CPU 40 not only controls the image processing part 15 performing the character and image compositing method of the present invention, but also controls and administrates the printing system 10, such as the scanner 12, the control device 14 itself and the printer 16. Concretely, the CPU 40 controls setting of reading conditions in the scanner 12 and the control of the scanner 12 based thereon, conversion of the image signal read by the scanner 12 to the digital image signal and image processing thereof, composition of the read image with the background image designated by a customer, the characters, such as the stereotyped characters or stereotyped

sentences designated by the customer and the address, name and free sentence of the customer as the digital image signal by the method of the present invention, image processing of the composited digital composition image signal, setting of the composition processing conditions, and automatic setting (auto set-up) of the image processing conditions, so as to control and administrate the entire printing system 10. The memory 42 stores the control data and composition image data necessary for operating the printing system 10, and is referred to when the aforementioned various controls and administrations are performed. At least a part of these data may be stored in the storing device 20 so that the CPU 40 refers to the storing device 20 in controlling. The control device 14 is basically constituted as described above.

As described above, the control device 14 outputs the digital composition image data performed composition process of characters and images to the printer 16. The printer 16 performs image exposures on a photosensitive material based on the digital composition image data signal performed composition process by the control device 14, and performs the developing process to output the print P bearing a reproduced image.

Fig. 3 shows a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the printer 16. As shown in the same figure, the printer 16 has an exposure control device 56, an exposure part 58 and a

developing part 60. The composite image data outputted from the control device 14 is transmitted to the exposure control device 56. The exposure control device 56 converts the composite image data to the image data of the resolution and form corresponding to the image reproducing method of the printer 16 (device dependent image data), for example, digital RGB image data signal, performs D/A conversion from the obtained digital RGB image data signal into the analog RGB image data signal, and drives an acoustic optical modulators (AOM) 61R, 61G and 61B in the image exposure part 58 so as to modulate a light beam in accordance with the analog RGB image data signal.

The exposure part 58 records the image of the aforesaid image data on a photosensitive material A by scanning and exposing a photosensitive material Z by light beam scanning. The exposure part 58 includes each light beam source of a light source 62R for emitting a light beam corresponding to the exposure of the R photosensitive layer of the photosensitive material A, a light source 62G corresponding to the G exposure in the same way, and a light source 62B corresponding to the B exposure, AOMs 61R, 61G and 61B for modulating the light beam emitted from each light source in accordance with the recording image, a polygon mirror 63 as a light deflector, an fθ lens 64 and a sub-scanning transporting means of the photosensitive material A.

Each light beam, which is emitted from the light sources 62R, 62G and 62B and advances at an angle different from each other, incidents on the corresponding AOMs 61R, 61G and 61B. Each driving signal of R, G and B corresponding to the recording image, that is, the image data supplied from the control device 14 is forwarded to each AOMs 61R, 61G and 61B from the exposure control device 56, so as to modulate the incident light beam in accordance with the recording image.

Each light beam modulated by the AOMs 61R, 61G and 61B incidents on a substantially identical point of the polygon mirror 63 and is reflected, deflected in the main scanning direction (in the direction of the arrow x in the figure), adjusted by the f $\theta$  lens 64 so as to form an image in a predetermined scanning position z in a predetermined beam form, and incidents on the photosensitive material A. A light beam correcting means or a surface tilt correction optical system may be arranged in the exposure part 58, if necessary.

The photosensitive material A is long sized, wound in the shape of a roll, and mounted in the predetermined position in the form of a magazine. The photosensitive material A is drawn out with a drawing roller (omitted in the figure), and is transported in the sub-scanning direction perpendicular to the main scanning direction (in the direction of the arrow y in the figure) with being retained in the scanning position z by a transporting roller pair 65 and 66 which is arranged

across the scanning position z to constitute a sub-scanning means. Since the light beam is deflected in the main scanning direction, the whole surface of the photosensitive material A transported in the sub-scanning direction is scanned and exposed two-dimensionally, and the image (latent image) of the image data transferred from the control device 14 is recorded on the photosensitive material A.

The photosensitive material A which has completed the exposure is transported into the developing part 60 by the transporting roller pair 67, and performed developing process to be the print P in which the composite image is reproduced. For example, if the photosensitive material A is a silver halide photosensitive material, the developing part 60 includes a coloring developing tank 68, a bleaching and fixing tank 69, washing tanks 70a, 70b, 70c and 70d, a drying part, a cutter (omitted in the figure) and the like. The photosensitive material A is performed a predetermined process in each processing tank, dried, and then wound in a roll shape to be outputted as the print P, or cut to a predetermined length corresponding to one sheet of print by the cutter to be outputted as the print P. The printer 16 is basically constituted as described above.

As shown in Fig. 1 or Fig. 2, the monitor 18 displays the document image read by the pre-scan of the scanner 12 and performed image processing by the control device 14 as well as

the composite image performed composite process for  
compositing the reading image with characters, and further  
displays the area of the image reproduced by the printer 16  
(finished print area). The monitor 18 preferably displays not  
5 only the pre-scanning image, but also the image of the  
customer's film read sequentially in monochrome as a video  
mode. Namely, it is preferable to constitute the monitor 18 so  
that, in the video mode, the operator is able to adjust and  
correct the position of the image in the finishing print area  
10 and the range thereof (magnification), the position of the  
customer's image in the image frame in the composite image and  
the range thereof (magnification), and the like, watching the  
monitor 18, for example, in pre-scanning. In the present  
invention, both in pre-scanning and main scanning, if the  
15 operator designates the adjustment or correction of the  
composite image to the control device 14, the printer is  
automatically once switched to the video mode, and after  
adjustment or correction, the pre-scanning (three times) and  
main scanning (three times) are able to be sequentially  
20 performed again.

As shown in Fig. 1, the storing device 20 is used as a  
sub-memory or backup memory of the data memory 42, frame  
memory 46 and the background image memory 54, which are  
incorporated memories in the control device 14, and includes a  
25 server, HD, removable HD, magnetic recording medium such as an

MO (optical magnetic recording medium), magnetic tape, or FD,  
and a driver thereof. The storing device 20 stores a part of  
or all of each digital image signal before the composition  
process about the background image in accordance with the  
5 purpose of a prepared postcard PC, the character image  
obtained by performing bitmap development to the stereotyped  
sentences and the address, name and free sentence of the  
customer which are composited with the background image, and  
the document image read by the scanner 12; digital composite  
10 image signal which is processed by the control device 14 or  
used by the printer 16; and the composite processing  
conditions, image processing conditions and exposure  
conditions of the digital image as well as the processing  
conditions of the photosensitive material. A storing device 20  
15 may be used instead of the incorporated memories in the  
control device 14.

The attaching machine 24 attaches the character and  
image composite print P outputted by the printer 16 onto the  
mount CRD, such as a New Year's card or standard postcard, so  
20 as to form the postcard PC in which characters, a background  
image and a picture image of a customer are attached onto a  
postcard as the mount. If the print P outputted from the  
printer 16 is wound in a roll shape, it is cut one by one  
before attaching.

25 The digital printing system 10 used in the present

invention is basically constituted as described above. The character and image composite method of the present invention performed in the digital printing system is described in detail below. Fig. 4 is a flow diagram showing one embodiment of the character and image composite method of the present invention performed in the composite processing part 50 and the character and image data generating part 52 of the control device 14.

As shown in Fig. 4, the background image (template image, bitmap image 1) Itp and stereotyped incorporated image (bitmap image 2) Itpc, which are selected by a customer, and a mask image Im are read out of the background image memory 54 to the composite processing part 50 by the designation by the operator (input with the keyboard 22a or the mouse 22b) for each of the three primary colors, for example, R, G and B. The scan image Is, which is read from the customer's negative film, reversal film, a reflection document or the like and performed image process, is inputted to the composite processing part 50 from the image processing part 48 of the image processing part 15 for each of R, G and B. A bitmap development character image Mc (Mc) generated in the character data generating part 52 based on the characters, such as the address, name and free sentence of the customer, inputted by the operator (with the keyboard 22a) is inputted for each of R, G and B. In Fig. 4, only the image data of one color among the R, G and B image

data, for example, only the G image data is shown. However, it goes without saying that the image data of the remaining two colors, R and B is able to be shown in the same way.

The template image Itp is arranged in an upper layer in the template coordinate system for performing composition. The template image Itp is the image in the size of a mount, such as a postcard (CRD), which incorporates the purpose of the postcard PC, a design corresponding to a New Year's card in the example shown in the figure, and stereotyped characters (sentences), "New Year's Greetings" in the example shown in the figure, and is the bitmap image 1 of the same resolution as the output resolution of the printer 16. The bitmap image Itpc of some kinds of designs and stereotyped characters (sentences), such as characters "akemashite" in the example shown in the figure, are able to be incorporated inside or outside the design of the template image Itp.

In the template image Itp, the character image, design (including a mark) and the like are formed in a non-scan image area Amt which is the outside part of a scan image area Amw (equivalent to the image window of a mask image Im described later) in which a scan image Is is composited and located. In the case of compositing the character image on the scan image Is, the area to be composited with the character image in the scan image area Amw is able to be designated as a specific area Amd, and a stereotyped incorporated image is able to be



formed as the template image Itp in the designated specific area Amd.

The mask image Im is arranged in a medium layer in the template coordinate system, and masks the image data except the image window Imw in which the scan image Is is incorporated (read image data outputted from the image processing part 48). In the mask image Im of the example shown in the figure, if the image data is expressed with 8 bit data for each color (24 bit full color in all), the mask value in the area of the image window Amw is set to 255 for every images of R, G and B, and the scan image Is arranged in a lower layer takes priority. In the non-scan image area Amt outside the area of the image window Amw, the mask value is set to 0 for every images of R, G, and B, and the template image Itp arranged in an upper layer takes priority. The mask composition method using the mask image is described later.

The scan image Is is arranged in a lower layer in the template coordinate system, and is the image which a customer requests to composite or the image in a part of the area thereof. The scan image Is is read so as to be identical with the image window Amw composited with the template image Itp, and even if a read image is present outside the image window Amw, the image is not composited and not reproduced in the postcard PC. The bitmap character image Mc is formed by performing bitmap development to the vector font characters,

such as the address, name or other free sentence of the customer. Since the printer 16 has a low resolution, the anti-alias process is performed to the bitmap character image Mc in the character image data generating part 52. The adjustment process for adjusting the color of the background image, which is the characteristic of the present invention, is also performed to the bitmap character image Mc. These processes are described later.

As shown in Fig. 4, when the aforementioned stereotyped incorporated image (bitmap image 2) Itpc is prepared for composition, and the template image (bitmap image 1) Itp in which a stereotyped image is provided in the designated specific area Amd and the mask image Im having the image window Amw of the scan image Is are prepared for each of the three colors R, G and B, the template image Itp is made to be the uppermost layer, and the scan image Is is made to be the lowermost layer so as to sandwich the mask image Im therebetween in a middle layer to perform masking. The stereotyped incorporated image Itpc and the scan image Is including the template image Itp are performed masking composition process, so as to form an intermediate image Ii.

If each of the R, G and B image data is defined as 8 bit (0 to 255), the mask value of each pixel of the mask image Im is described with 0 to 255 of 8 bit. The image data 0 shows the highest density (highest exposure amount), and image data

255 (2<sup>8</sup> - 1) shows the lowest density (lowest exposure amount).

If the mask value of the mask image Im is defined as A, the

pixel values of the three colors (R, G and B) of the template

image Itp in the highest layer (template data) are Br, Bg or

5 Bb, and the pixel values of the three colors (R, G and B) of

the scan image Is in the lowest layer (scan image data) are Cr,

Cg or Cb, the image data of the three colors IR, IG and IB of

the intermediate image Ii which is performed watermark

compositing process based on the pixel values of the template

10 image Itp and the pixel values of the scan image Im, are

obtained by the following equation (1).

$$IR = (Cr - Br) \times A/255 + Br$$

$$IG = (Cg - Bg) \times A/255 + Bg$$

$$IB = (Cb - Bb) \times A/255 + Bb \quad \dots (1)$$

15 The bitmap development character image Mc performed the

anti-alias process in advance, for example, "Kanagawa

prefecture" in the illustrated example, is composited with the

intermediate image Ii obtained as described above, and at the

same time, the stereotyped image in the specific area And, for

20 example, the character image "New Year's Greetings" in the

illustrated example, is composited with the scan image Is, so

as to obtain the image data of three colors of the print image

Ip in which required characters and images are composited.

The flow of one example of the character process before

the composite process of the character image Mc with the

intermediate image Ii, which is performed in the character and

image data generating part 52 and the composite processing

part 50, is described. The case of black characters and the

5 case of reversal white characters are shown in Fig. 5 and Fig.

6, respectively. As shown in Fig. 5 in the case of black

characters, or as shown in Fig. 6 in the case of reversal

white characters, the anti-alias process is performed to the

vector font characters. The anti-alias process is the process,

10 in the case of low resolution of the printer 16, such as 300

dpi, for delete the jaggy on the edge of the character, which

stands out, if outputted directly, and smoothing the change of

the density in the outer circumference part of the characters,

that is, the boundary area between the characters and the

15 background image, so as to make the characters in the print

image P natural. In the present case, in performing the bitmap

development of the vector font characters, for example, an 8

bit image (gradation 8 bit/pixel) is generated with the number

of pixels n times as much as a target (output) resolution, and

20 the image is standardized with n x n pixels, thereby a medium

density image, that is, a gray scale image is obtained in the

boundary area of the character. In this way, n x n, for

example, 6 x 6 anti-alias process is performed to the

characters, to obtain the bitmap character image (gray scale).

25 An example of the anti-alias process performed here is

described in detail. If the size of the characters is defined as  $S$  point, the resolution is 8 bit/pixel in  $\alpha$  dpi, the image data is formed in which the character image is performed bitmap development (also called rasterization or pixel resolution) in the  $n \times S$  point size which is  $n$  times of the target character size with the resolution of  $\alpha$  dpi. Fig. 7(a) shows an example of the bitmap character image of  $n = 3$  and  $3 \times S$  point.  $n$  is about 2 to 6 in general. Though the larger  $n$  is, the more the memory is spent in image resolution, smooth edge is obtained. The bitmap character image is preferably a binary image as the illustrated example.

As shown in Fig. 7(a) and 7(b), the total pixel value  $T_{ij}$  in the  $n \times n$  area of the generated bitmap character image is obtained. The  $n \times n$  area is the area in which the length and breadth of the character image enlarged and performed bitmap development are marked off with a grid of pixel unit corresponding to their enlargement magnification  $n$  (three times in the illustrated example). Using the total  $T_{ij}$ , image data  $M_{ij}$  of the character image performed anti-alias process by the following equation (2) is generated. Namely, the character image generated by enlargement is standardized and reduced to generate the image data  $M_{ij}$  of the character image.

$$M_{ij} = 255 - 255 \times T_{ij} \div (n \times n) \quad \dots (2)$$

For example, in the case of the area  $M_{011}$  in Fig. 7(a),

$M_{011} = 255$  because  $T_{11} = 0$ . In the case of the area  $M_{022}$ ,  $M_{022} = 28$  because  $T_{22} = 8$ , and thus the image (image data) performed pixel resolution as shown in Fig. 7 (b) is obtained. The character image shown by the image data  $M_{0ij}$  becomes the character image obtained by smoothing the character image generated by general pixel resolution.

Then, as shown in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6, the bitmap character image (gray scale), which is obtained by  $n \times n$ , for example,  $6 \times 6$  anti-alias process as described above, is further performed anti-alias process 2. The anti-alias process 2 adjusts the thickness of the character appearance of the gray scale character image performed the  $n \times n$  anti-alias process. For example, if the change of the medium density in the boundary area of the outer circumference of the character image is made larger in the outer side of the character image, that is, if the value of the medium density pixel is brought close to the character density (for example, in the case of a black character, image data is 0), jaggy which has been made invisible by the anti-alias process appears again. If the change thereof is made larger in the inner side of the character image, that is, if the value of the medium density pixel is brought close to the background density (for example, in the case of a black character on a white background, image data is 255), characters becomes thin. Accordingly, the anti-alias process 2 preferably adjusts the thickness and edge of

the character image to adjust character appearance. The anti-alias process 2 is referred as the conversion F.

If the density of an optional point  $P_0$  of the gray scale character image performed the  $n \times n$  anti-alias process ( $M_{01}$ ) is defined as  $M_0$ , the density  $M$  of an optional point  $P_0$  of the gray scale image performed the conversion F is obtained by the following equation (3). Namely, the conversion F is expressed with following equation (3).

$$\text{If } 0 \leq M_0 < 96, M = 2M_0/3$$

$$\text{If } 96 \leq M_0 \leq 255, M = 6M_0/5 - 256/5 \quad \dots (3)$$

The conversion F expressed with the equation (3) is shown by the upper left graph in Fig. 8 (a) (the case of black characters) or Fig. 8 (b) (the case of reverse white character) (both ones are the same). In the actual process performing the method of the present invention, not the relational expression as the aforesaid equation (3), but lookup table (LUT) conversion of 256 steps of 0 to 255 as shown in Fig. 9 is preferable.

As shown in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6, the density  $M$  of the optional point (pixel)  $P_0$  of the gray scale character image adjusted the thickness of the characters by the conversion F is changed to generate character image data  $M_{1r}$ ,  $M_{1g}$  and  $M_{1b}$  of the three colors R, G and B considering the gray balance. This density conversion is the characteristic part of the present

invention, and is called conversion G, which is the process for normalizing with the maximum value  $M_{cmax}$  and/or minimum value  $M_{cmin}$  of the character image data (wherein  $c = r, g$  and  $b$ ) and for limiting the dynamic range of the character image data.

In the case of recording the character image with black characters, the image data ( $M_r$ ,  $M_g$ ,  $M_b$ ) may be  $(0, 0, 0)$ . However, in this case, as described before, the laser light for exposure is so strong that saturation occurs to cause blur, and black characters are colored depending on the color of the background to be composited with the black characters, and if the color is reddish, the characters appear poor and are disliked. Accordingly, in the density conversion G, to improve the appearance of the black characters, for example, since not reddish but bluish black characters are preferred, the image data showing blackness ( $M_{rmin}$ ,  $M_{gmin}$ ,  $M_{bmin}$ ) is set to  $(15, 10, 10)$ . In the case of the appearance of the hue of black characters, the minimum value  $M_{cmin}$  is adjusted, while in the case of the appearance of the hue of reverse white characters, the maximum value  $M_{cmax}$  is preferably adjusted. Accordingly, the present invention is preferably constituted so as to adjust the minimum value  $M_{cmin}$  for black characters and the maximum value  $M_{cmax}$  for reverse characters. However, both the maximum value  $M_{cmax}$  and the minimum value  $M_{cmin}$  are preferably adjusted for both characters. If the character image is formed with black characters, the color of the background image data

to be composited with the character image effects the appearance of the black characters, and thus the maximum value  $M_{cmax}$ , the minimum value  $M_{cmin}$  or both of them of the background image data are also preferably adjustable.

As described above, in the density conversion G of the characteristic of the present invention, a user is able to set the character density area for each color of R, G and B, that is, the maximum and minimum values  $M_{rmax}$ ,  $M_{rmin}$ ,  $M_{gmax}$ ,  $M_{gmin}$ ,  $M_{bmax}$ , and  $M_{bmin}$  for each color, in accordance with the hue of the background (color balance of the image data). In the case of black characters, the user is also able to set the character density area of the background image data for each color of R, G and B, that is, the maximum and minimum values  $I_{rmax}$ ,  $I_{rmin}$ ,  $I_{gmax}$ ,  $I_{gmin}$ ,  $I_{bmax}$  and  $I_{bmin}$  for each color.

As described above, if the maximum value  $M_{cmax}$  and the minimum value  $M_{cmin}$  of the character image data expressed in  $2^n$ -gradation data (n1 bit data, in this case, 256 gradation (8 bit data)) for each color of R, G and B have been set by a user, and further, in the case of black characters, if the maximum value  $I_{cmax}$  and the minimum value  $I_{cmin}$  (c = r, g and b) of the background image have been set, the density data M of the optional point  $P_0$  of the gray scale character image

obtained by the conversion F is adjusted its color balance by the density conversion G expressed with the following equation (4), and is converted to the density data of the character

image  $M_{lr}$ ,  $M_{lg}$  and  $M_{lb}$  for the primary three colors R, G and B adjusted the dynamic range.

$$\begin{aligned} M_{lc} &= (M_{cmax} - M_{cmin}) \times M / \{(2^{n1} - 1) - 0\} + M_{cmin} \\ &= (M_{cmax} - M_{cmin}) \times M / \{(2^{n1} - 1) - 0\} + M_{cmin} \\ &= (M_{cmax} - M_{cmin}) \times M / (255 - 0) + M_{cmin} \quad \dots (4) \end{aligned}$$

The conversion G expressed with the above equation (4) is shown by the upper right graph in Fig. 8 (a) (the case of black characters) or Fig. 8 (b) (the case of reverse white characters) (both ones are the same).

In the case of black characters, the density  $I_c$  ( $I_r$ ,  $I_g$ ,  $I_b$ ) of the position in the background image, which is to be composited with an optional point  $P_0$  in the character image, is converted to the density of the background image adjusted the dynamic range  $I_{lr}$ ,  $I_{lg}$ , and  $I_{lb}$  by the density conversion G expressed with the following equation (5). Namely, only in the case of black characters, the following equation (5) is calculated.

$$\begin{aligned} I_{lc} &= (I_{cmax} - I_{cmin}) \times I_c / \{(2^{n1} - 1) - 0\} + I_{cmin} \\ &= (I_{cmax} - I_{cmin}) \times I_c / \{(2^{n1} - 1) - 0\} + I_{cmin} \\ &= (I_{cmax} - I_{cmin}) \times I_c / (255 - 0) + I_{cmin} \quad \dots (5) \end{aligned}$$

If the character image obtained after performing the conversion G (density  $M_{lr}$ ,  $M_{lg}$ , and  $M_{lb}$ ) is directly composited with the background image (in the case of black characters, density  $I_{lr}$ ,  $I_{lg}$ , and  $I_{lb}$ , and in the case of reverse white

characters, density  $I_r$ ,  $I_g$ , and  $I_b$ ), the medium density pixel part of the outer circumference part of the character image which is performed the anti-alias process stands out in the state of dots and does not match the background image, depending on the color of the background when the background image is colored, for example, in the case of comparatively high density background image for black characters, or in the case of comparatively low density background image for reverse white characters. Accordingly, in the present invention, as shown in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6, the process for matching and compositing the medium density pixel part of the outer circumference part of the character image which is performed the anti-alias process with the background image is preferably performed. The process is called matching composition process.

In this way, the character and image composition image (RGB) is able to be obtained.

If the matching composition process of the character image in which the color (character) balance is adjusted (density  $M_r$ ,  $M_g$ , and  $M_b$ ) with the background image in which the color balance is adjusted (density  $I_r$ ,  $I_g$ , and  $I_b$ ) is defined as conversion H, a composition image Dc ( $D_r$ ,  $D_g$ , and  $D_b$ ) performed matching composition process by the conversion H expressed with the following equation (6) is able to be obtained.

If  $M_{ic} \neq M_{cmax}$ , defined as  $c = r, g, b, n1 = 8$ ,

$$Dc = I_{ic} \times (M_{ic} - M_{cmin}) / (2^{n1} - 1) + M_{cmin}$$

$$= I_{ic} \times (M_{ic} - M_{cmin}) / 255 + M_{cmin} .$$

If  $M_{ic} = M_{cmax}$ , defined as  $c = r, g, b$ ,

$$Dc = I_{ic} . \quad \dots (6)$$

In the case of reverse white characters, if the matching composition process of the character image in which the color (character) balance is adjusted (density  $M_r$ ,  $M_g$ , and  $M_b$ ) with the background image in which the color balance is adjusted (density  $I_r$ ,  $I_g$ , and  $I_b$ ) is defined as conversion H', a composition image Dc ( $D_r$ ,  $D_g$ , and  $D_b$ ) performed matching composition process by the conversion H' expressed with the following equation (7) is able to be obtained defining  $c = r, g, b, n1 = 8$ .

$$Dc = \{Ic - (2^{n1} - 1)\} \times (M_{ic} - M_{cmin}) / (M_{cmax} - M_{cmin}) +$$

$$(2^{n1} - 1)$$

$$= (Ic - 255) \times (M_{ic} - M_{cmin}) / (M_{cmax} - M_{cmin}) + 255$$

$$\dots (7)$$

The conversion H (in the case of black characters) expressed with the above equation (6) is shown by the lower right graph in Fig. 8 (a), and the conversion H' (in the case of reverse white characters) expressed with the above equation (6) is shown by the lower right graph in Fig. 8 (b). In this way, as shown in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6, the character image  $M_c$  ( $M_{ic}$ ) generated from the vector font characters is able to be

performed composite process with the background image  $I_c$ , and the composite image  $D_c$  ( $c = r, g$  and  $b$ ) performed matching composition process is able to be obtained.

In the aforementioned description, the density conversion  $G$  and the conversion  $H$  or  $H'$  are performed independently for all pixels of the template (mount) image. However, the present invention is not limited thereto, and composite conversion  $HG$  or  $H'G$  may be obtained by compositing the conversion  $G$  with the conversion  $H$  or  $H'$  in advance, and the gray scale image data performed the conversion  $F$  is processed by the composite conversion  $HG$  or composition conversion  $H'G$  at a time to obtain the composite image  $D_c$  ( $D_r, D_g, D_b$ ), so as to reduce the amount of the conversion process (calculation), the processing time and processing load. The composite conversion  $HG$  is expressed with the following equation (8).

If  $M_c \neq (2^{n1} - 1) = 255$ , defined as  $c = r, g, b, n1 = 8$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} D_c &= (M_{cmax} - M_{cmin}) \times I_c \times M / (2^{n1} - 1)^2 + M_{cmin} \\ &= (M_{cmax} - M_{cmin}) \times I_c \times M / 255^2 + M_{cmin} \end{aligned} \quad \dots (8)$$

If  $M_c = 255, D_c = I_c$ .  
The composite conversion  $H'G$  is able to be expressed with the following equation (9) defining  $c = r, g, b$ , and  $n1 = 8$ .

$$D_c = \{I_c - (2^{n1} - 1)\} \times M_c / (2^{n1} - 1) + (2^{n1} - 1)$$

$$= (I_c - 255) \times M_c / 255 + 255 \quad \dots (9)$$

In this way, as shown in Fig. 4, the bitmap character image  $M_c$  is performed composite process with the intermediate image  $I_i$ , and the composite image  $D_c$  performed matching composite process is able to be obtained. In the present invention, it goes without saying that the composition process of the bitmap character image  $M_c$  with the background image  $I_c$  (intermediate image  $I_i$ ) is not limited to the aforementioned matching composite process.

The stereotyped image in the specific area  $A_{md}$ , the image of the characters "New Year's Greetings" (pixels forming the image) in this case, is composited with the scan image  $I_s$  in the composite intermediate image  $I_i$ , if necessary. As to the composition of the stereotyped image in the specific area, if the stereotyped image is formed of the black characters or reverse white characters performed the aforementioned anti-alias process, the aforesaid character and image composite method may be performed. If the stereotyped image used for composition is a logo, illustration, non-anti-alias character, or the like, the process for simply placing the stereotyped image on the scan image as the background is performed. The simple placing process is described. The simple placing process adopts the scan image  $I_s$ , if the RGB image data of the template image (bitmap image 1)  $I_{tp}$  is, for example, (255, 255, 255) about the image pixel designated in the specific area  $A_{md}$

of the template coordinate system, and adopts the template image (bitmap image 1) Itp directly, if the RGB data thereof is other than (255, 255, 255). In this way, the stereotyped image in the designated specific area Amd is able to be simply placed on the scan image Is for composition.

The composition of the stereotyped image in the specific area with the scan image (incorporation) is described as follows in the template attribution file for the character and image composition with the template coordinate system. The contents of the template attribution file of the composition of the stereotyped image in the specific area (ONIMAGEEn section) is shown in the following Table 1.

(Table 1)

Keyword	Data form	Name and description
OnImageNo n;		Specific area No. (1 to 9);
OnImageType n;		Designation of composite processing method
		1:Black characters, 2:Reverse characters, 3:Simple placing
		*: In 1 and 2, ONIMAGE is anti-alias characters, and in composition, black or white process and matching process are performed. In 3, ONIMAGE is a logo,

		illustration or non-anti-alias character, and image is simply placed on background.
CharImageHPos XXXX;		Coordinate in the main scanning direction from upper left in the template image.
		Coordinate in the sub-scanning direction from upper left in the template image.
CharImageWigth nnnn;		The number of pixels in the main scanning direction in specific area.
CharImageHigth nnnn;		The number of pixels in the sub-scanning direction in specific area.
		The unit of the coordinate XXXX of the keyword CharImageHPos and CharImageVPos is mm. With the aforementioned designation method, designation of the specific area on the template image Itp and designation of the contents of the process thereof are able to be described.

In the way as described above, as shown in Fig. 4, the bitmap character image Mc generated in the character image data generating part 52, "Kanagawa prefecture" in the illustrated example, is performed the matching composition process in the area of the template image Itp of the composite intermediate image Ii, and the composite image data for



obtaining the print image P in which the stereotyped image in the designated specific area Amd, the characters "New Year's Greetings" in the illustrated example, is simply incorporated as reverse white characters, is able to be formed in the composite processing part 50. In the composite image data obtained in this way, the appearance of the character color is not effected by the hue of the background image to be composited with the characters, and the appearance of the character corresponding to the customer's desire is obtained. For example, characters are finished not in reddish but in bluish, and the image data is able to output the composite print image P adjusted the appearance of the character color to the hue of the background image by the printer.

The image data composited characters with an image is obtained in this way. The composite process by the composite processing part 50 is performed at first to the successive reading image data in the video mode which is obtained by thinning and reading the customer's image with the scanner 12 so as to be displayed on the CRT display 18, or to the pre-scan image data. The composite image data generated by compositing the video mode image data or pre-scan image data with characters or a template image, is displayed on the CRT display 18 from the composite processing part 50 via the D/A converter 51. If an operator confirms the composition state of the composited characters and customer's image with his eyes,

and contents with the display composite image and inputs that point, the digital print system 10 performs the aforementioned post image process or image processing in the control device 14 to the image data obtained by performing the pre-scan and main scan of the customer's image by the scanner 12, or by immediately performing the main scan in the case of after pre-scanning, and performs the aforementioned character and image composite process of the present invention in the composite processing part 50. The composite image data obtained in this way is transmitted to the printer 16 from the composite processing part 50, and the print image P is outputted by the printer 16. The obtained print image P is the composite image in which the appearance of the character color is not effected by the hue of the background composited with the characters, and the characters and image are well.

In the case of correcting the composite customer's image displayed on the display 18, particularly, in the case of correcting the position or size (magnification) thereof, the digital print system, especially in the video mode, displays the composite image on the display 18 substantially at real time, and thus the correction is performed by adjusting or replacing the position of the film document or reflection document as the customer's image by means of the carrier of the scanner 12, or by adjusting the size or magnification by means of the image forming lens unit 34, with watching the

displayed composite image on the display 18. When a character of the displayed composite image is corrected, an accurate sentence is inputted by means of the keyboard 22a or mouse 22b to display the composite image in which the correct character is composited on the display 18. In the case of correcting the template image or incorporated stereotyped image in the display composite image, the number or mark of the correct image is inputted and designated by means of the keyboard 22a and mouse 22b to display the composite image composited the correct template image on the display 18. Then, the obtained composite image data is transmitted from the composite processing part 50 to the printer 16, and the print image P is outputted by the printer 16 as described above. The print image P obtained in this way is not only the composite image in which the appearance of the character color is not effected by the hue of the background composited with the characters and the characters and image are well, but also the image including no error and no deviation in the characters and image.

The customer's image used in this case may be the image of a film document, such as a negative film or reversal film, or the image of a reflection document. Accordingly, in the digital print system 10, the scanner 12 may a scanner for reading a film document or a scanner for reading a reflection document, but it is preferable to provide both scanners. Any

kinds of stereotyped image may be used in this case as far as a character drawing image, such as characters, logo, illustration, and any kinds of character may be used, such as black characters, reverse white characters, outline letters, anti-alias characters or non-anti-alias characters.

The character and image composition method of the present invention has been described in detail. However, the present invention is not limited to the aforementioned embodiment, and the character data which has been stored in a storing medium like a FD may be used as the character data, such as the address, name and free sentence of a customer. Or, the image data which has already been read from the document or generated by a computer, and stored in the image recording medium, such as FD, HD or MO, may be used as the customer's document image and the reading image of the customer's document. In this way, the present invention may be performed various improvement or changed within the range of the point of the present invention.

#### 20 [Effects of the Invention]

As described above in detail, the present invention is able to obtain the image data for outputting the composite print image in which the appearance of the character color is not influenced by the hue of the background image composited with characters, the appearance of the characters

corresponding to the customer's desire is obtained, not reddish but bluish finishing is performed, and the appearance of the character color is adjusted in contrast with the hue of the background image.

5

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of an embodiment of the digital print system performing the character and image composition method relating to the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a block diagram of an embodiment of the control device of the digital print system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a schematic sectional view of an embodiment of the image output device of the digital print system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is an illustration describing the flow of an embodiment of the image and character compositing method of the present invention;

Fig. 5 is an illustration describing the flow of an embodiment of the character process from character generation to character and image composition in the character and image compositing method shown in Fig. 4;

Fig. 6 is an illustration describing the flow of another embodiment of the character process from character generation to character and image composition in the character and image compositing method shown in Fig. 4;

Figs. 7(a) and 7(b) are graphs showing an example of the conversion function of each conversion step of the character process shown in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6;

Figs. 8(a) and 8(b) are illustrations for describing the anti-alias process of the character process shown in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6; and

Fig. 9 is an illustration showing an example of the conversion table used for one conversion step of the character process shown in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6.

10

[Description of the References]

- 10 Digital print system
- 12 Image input device
- 14 Control device
- 15 Image processing part
- 16 Image output device
- 18 Display device (display monitor)
- 20 Storing device
- 22 Data input device
- 20 22a Keyboard
- 22b Mouse
- 24 Attaching machine
- 40 CPU
- 42 Memory
- 25 44 Post image processing part

46, 46a and 46b Frame memories

48 Image processing part

50 Composite processing part

52 Character image data generating part

5 54 Background image (template image) memory

    Amd Specific area

    Amt Image area (image window)

    Amw Non-image area

    Itp Mount image (background image, template image)

10 Itpc Incorporated stereotyped image

    Im Mask image

    Is Scan (customer) image

    Ii Intermediate composite image

    Mc Character image

15 P print image

    CRD Postcard (mount)

    PC Postcard

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H04N 1/387	H04N 1/387	
	G06F 15/66	310

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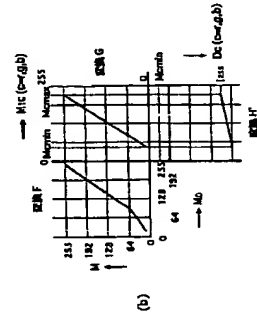
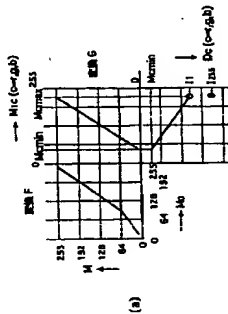
審査請求	未請求	請求項の数	7	OL	(全 18 頁)
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(54) 【発明の名称】 文字と画像の合成方法

(57) 【要約】

【課題】 デジタルプリントシステムのデジタルフォトブックを用いて文字と画像が合成されたプリント画像を、文字と背景画像の色味により、文字色が見えが影響されず、特に好まれる色味に仕上げることで、背景画像の色味に対して、もしくは応じて文字色を見えを調整できる文字と画像の合成方法を提供する。

【解決手段】 文字と画像とが合成されたプリント画像を出力するためのデジタル合成画像データを作成するに際し、文字画像をビットマップ展開して得られた 3 原色デジタル文字画像データの各色の値を 3 原色デジタル背景画像データの各色の値に対して調整することにより、上記課題を解決する。



【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項 1】 文字と画像とが合成されたプリント画像を出力するためのデジタル合成画像データを作成するに際し、文字画像をビットマップ展開して得られた 3 原色デジタル文字画像データの各色の値を 3 原色デジタル背景画像データの各色の値に対して調整することを特徴とする文字と画像の合成方法。

【請求項 2】 前記 3 原色のデジタル文字画像データの各色の調整は、前記各色の上限度および下限度の少なくとも一方を設定することにより行う請求項 1 に記載の文字と画像の合成方法。

【請求項 3】 前記 3 原色のデジタル文字画像データの各色の調整は、前記各色の設定された上限度および下限度で正規化する処理である請求項 2 に記載の文字と画像の合成方法。

【請求項 4】 前記 3 原色のデジタル文字画像データの各色の調整は、前記デジタル文字画像データの n ビットデータとし、前記デジタル文字画像データの R、G、B 各色の値をそれぞれ  $r$ 、 $g$ 、 $b$  とし、変換前のグレースケール文字画像データの値を  $M$  とし、色バランズが調整された変換後の各色の文字画像データの値を  $r'$ 、 $g'$ 、 $b'$  とする時、下記式で表される請求項 3 に記載の文字と画像の合成方法。  

$$M' = (M \times r - M \times r') \times M / (2^{n-1} - 1) + M'$$

【請求項 5】 前記文字が黒文字の場合、この文字と合成される前記 3 原色のデジタル背景画像データの上限値または下限値、もしくはその両方を調整する請求項 2~4 のいずれかに記載の文字と画像の合成方法。

【請求項 6】 前記背景画像データの各色の値の調整は、前記各色の設定された上限度および下限度で正規化する処理である請求項 5 に記載の文字と画像の合成方法。

【請求項 7】 前記背景画像データの各色の値の調整は、前記背景画像データを n ビットデータとし、前記背景画像データの R、G、B 各色の設定された上限値および下限度をそれぞれ  $r$ 、 $g$ 、 $b$  とし、変換前の前記背景画像データの値を  $r'$ 、 $g'$ 、 $b'$  とし、変換後の前記背景画像データの値を  $r''$ 、 $g''$ 、 $b''$  とし、変換後の各色の文字画像データの値を  $r''$ 、 $g''$ 、 $b''$  とし、変換後の文字と画像の合成方法。  

$$r'' = (r' - r) \times r / (2^{n-1} - 1) + r''$$

【発明の詳細な説明】

【0001】

【発明の属する技術分野】 本発明は、ポストカードなどのデジタル文書・画像のプリント画像において住所・氏名・自由文などの文字と予め用意された画像やフイルム原稿から読み取られた画像などの背景画像とを合成する

文字と画像の合成方法に関する。

【0002】

【従来の技術】 従来より、お正月の年賀状や結婚などの通知状などとして、文字と写真画像などが合成されたプリント画像を年賀はがきや定型はがきなどの右紙上に持つ写真画像はがき、いわゆるポストカードが多数用いられている。このようなポストカードは、従来、顧客 (ユーザ) のネガティブフイルムやポジティブフイルムを画像マスクを用いて焼き込む前に、住所・氏名・自由文およびその他の定型文などの文字を焼き込む必要があるため、これらの文字を焼下原稿として作成した後画像マスクを用いて焼き込む必要があった。従って、従来のポストカードの作成においては、各々に文字用のリソフイルムと、ユーザ画像および定型画像の各フイルムとの合計少なくとも 3 枚のフイルムが必要であった。この 3 枚のフイルムを各々にセットし、3 枚 1 組にセットされたフイルムを従来のアナログプリンタに装填し、3 枚セットされたフイルムによって形成された文字と画像との合成画像を画像マスクを用いて感光材料 (ペーパー) に露光によって直接焼き付けることを所要時間繰返し、所要枚数、例えば 50 枚、100 枚、200 枚、1000 枚等の枚数だけ焼き付けていた。このようにして得られた所定枚数のプリント画像を現像後 1 枚毎に分断し、専用の貼付機を用いて、官製はがきや私製はがき等のはがきや台紙等に貼り付けてポストカードを製作していた。

【0003】 ところで、住所、氏名等は固有の文字が用いられることがあるため、類似した文字でも微妙な違いが要求されることから修正が多くなるが、従来のアナログプリンタでは、文字専用のリソフイルムを各々に焼下作成、露光、現像を行って作成する必要があるため、修正が大変で、面倒であるという問題があった。また、文字と、ユーザ画像と、定型画像との 3 枚のフイルムを 1 組としてセットして合成画像を得ているが、年賀状などは、年末の短期間のうちに多数の件を処理しなければならぬため、好まれる台紙画像であれば、台紙画像などの定型画像を多数用意する必要があるし、あるいはいくつかの定型画像を水々々に組み換える必要があり、組み換えを厭う恐れが大となるなどのコストアップにつながるという問題があった。また、ユーザ画像の画像色を様々な形状にするためには、画像マスクを用いて多量に焼く必要があるが、これを行うのは、極めて大変であるという問題もあった。

【0004】 一方、近年では、デジタル露光を利用する焼付システム、すなわち、ネガフイルム、リバーサルフイルム等の写真フイルム原稿 (以下、フイルム原稿) というに記録された画像情報を光電的に読み取って、読み

成処理されたデジタル合成画像信号に基づいて感光材料

に画像露光し、現像処理して合成画像を相持するプリン  
トPを出力する画像出力装置 (以下、プリンタともい  
う) 16とし、スキヤナ12で読み取られた原稿画像や制  
御装置14で合成処理された合成画像を表示し、プリン  
タ16で出力される画像の傾斜 (仕上りプリント傾斜)  
を表示する画像表示装置 (以下、モニタともいう) 18  
と、予め用意されたポストカードPの目的に応じた背  
景画像、背景画像に合成される定型文字や入力された顧客  
の住所・氏名・自由文等の文字のビットマップ展開され  
た文字画像およびスキヤナ12で読み取られた原稿画像  
などの合成処理される前の各々のデジタル画像信号、ま  
たは制御装置14によって処理された、あるいはプリン  
タ16で用いられるデジタル合成画像信号、さらにはデ  
ジタル画像の合成処理条件や画像処理条件や露光条件や  
感光材料の処理条件などを記憶するサーバーやHDなど  
や、もしくはMO (光磁気記録媒体) あるいは磁気テー  
プやFDなどの磁気記録媒体とそのドライバから構成さ  
れる記憶装置20と、顧客の住所・氏名・自由文等の入  
力を行うためのキーボード22aやマウス22bなど  
のデータ入力装置22と、プリンタ16によって出力さ  
れた文字・画像合成プリントを年賀はがきや定型はがき  
などの台紙CRDに貼り付けてポストカードPを作成  
する貼付機24とを有する。

【0015】スキヤナ12は、フィルム原稿 (以下、単  
にフィルムという) 等に撮影された1コマの画像を光電  
的に読み取る装置で、光源26と、可変絞り27と、面  
像をR (赤)、G (緑) およびB (青) の三原色に分解  
するためのR、GおよびBの3枚の色フィルタを有し、  
回転して任意の色フィルタを光路に作用させる色フィル  
タ28と、フィルムに入射する露光光をフィルムの光  
軸に垂直な面方向で均一に拡散させる拡散ボックス30  
と、フィルムを各コマ毎に順次所定の駆動位置2に搬送  
するフィルムキャリア32 (以下、キャリア32とす  
る) と、駆動レベニョット34と、フィルムの1コマ  
の画像を読み取るエリアセンサであるCCDセンサ36  
と、アンプ (増幅器) 38とを有する。

【0016】このようなスキヤナ12においては、光原  
26から射出され、可変絞り27によって光量調整さ  
れ、色フィルタ28を通して色調整され、拡散ボッ  
クス30で拡散された露光光が、キャリア32によつて  
光軸Rに対応する駆動位置2に位置されたフィルムの1  
コマの画像に入射し、透過することにより、フィルムに  
撮影されたこの1コマの画像を相持する投影光が得られ  
る。また、図示例のデジタルプリンタシステム (以下、  
単にプリンタシステムという) 10においては、キャリ  
ア32は、スキヤナ12の本体の所定位置に装着自在に  
構成される。図示例においては、フィルムの搬送サイ

タのR、G、B各色の設定された上限値および下限値を、  
それぞれMmaxおよびMmin ( $c=r, g, b$ ) とし、  
変換前のグレースケール文字画像データMと、  
色変換前のグレースケール文字画像データMと、  
色変換後のグレースケール文字画像データMと、  
の値をM' ( $c=r, g, b$ ) とする時、下記式で表さ  
れるのが好ましい。

$$M' = (M_{max} - M_{min}) \times M / ((2^{n-1}) - 0) + M_{min}$$

また、前記文字が黒文字の場合、この文字と合成される  
前記3原色のデジタル背景画像の画像データの上限値ま  
たは下限値、もしくはその両方を調整するのが好まし  
い。

【0012】また、前記背景画像データの各色の値の調  
整変換は、前記各色の設定された上限値および/または  
下限値で正規化する処理であるのが好ましい。また、前  
記背景画像データの各色の値の調整変換は、前記背景画  
像データをnビットデータとし、前記背景画像データ  
のR、G、B各色の設定された上限値および下限値をそ  
れぞれI' maxおよびI' min ( $c=r, g, b$ ) とし、変  
換前の前記背景画像データの値をI ( $c=r, g, b$ ) とし、  
変換後の各色の文字画像データの値をI' ( $c=r, g, b$ ) と  
する時、下記式で表されるのが好ましい。

$$I' = (I'_{max} - I'_{min}) \times I / ((2^{n-1}) - 0) + I'_{min}$$

【0013】

【発明の図面の形態】 本発明に係る文字と画像の合成方  
法を添付の図面に示す好適実施例に基づいて以下に詳細  
に説明する。図1は、本発明の文字と画像の合成方法を  
実施するデジタルプリンタシステムの一実施例をブロッ  
ク図で示す概略図である。以下の説明においては、本発  
明の文字と画像の合成方法を行う対象として、顧客の展  
望画像と、年賀に因んだ絵柄を持つ背景画像と、年賀に  
因んだ「賀正」や「賀賀新年」などの定型文字や定型文  
や顧客の住所・氏名・自由文等の文字とを合成した年賀  
状などのポストカードを代表例としているが、本発明は  
これに限定されるものでなく、対象とする用途や主旨に  
応じて適宜選択可能なことは勿論である。

【0014】図1に示すデジタルプリンタシステム10  
は、顧客の持ち込んだフィルム原稿の相持画像を光電的  
に読み取る画像入力装置 (以下、スキヤナともいう) 1  
2と、スキヤナ12での読み取り条件の設定やこれに基  
づくスキヤナ12の制御、スキヤナ12で読み取られた  
画像信号のデジタル画像画像信号化およびその画像処理、こ  
のデジタル画像画像信号化した背景画像と顧客が指定した  
定型文字や定型文や顧客の住所・氏名・自由文等の文字  
との本発明法によるデジタル画像画像信号としての合成、合  
成されたデジタル合成画像信号の画像処理、台紙処理条  
件の設定および画像処理条件の自動設定 (オートセット  
アップ) などを行う制御装置14と、制御装置14で合

【0007】

【発明が解決しようとする課題】ところで、このような  
デジタルプリンタシステムを用いてポストカードを作成  
する場合、文字と画像とが合成されたポストカードにお  
いては、住所、氏名などの文字は黒で仕上られること  
が多いが、カラー画像形成が必要であるため、ポストカ  
ードには、3原色、例えば3本の異なる狭帯域波長のレ  
ーザ光の露光および現像によって赤 (R)、緑 (G)、  
青 (B) を発色させる乳剤層を有するカラー感光材料が  
用いられているため、黒文字を合成する背景画像の色味  
によっては、黒文字の色味が影響されるという問題があ  
った。例えば、R、G、Bの各色の露光用レーザ光の露  
光量を最大値、例えば8ビットのデジタル値換算でR、  
G、B = (0, 0, 0) となる黒のレベルで3原色のバ  
ランスを取り、はっきりとした黒黒を発色させている  
が、背景画像の色味によっては、黒黒に見えず色味を帯  
びて見ることがあるという問題があった。そこで、ポ  
ストカードにおいては、黒文字が赤味を帯びるのが嫌わ  
れるため、現像所 (ラボ) では、どちらかといえば黒文  
字を少し青味に仕上げたいという強い要望があった。ま  
た、R、G、B = (0, 0, 0) となる黒のレベルで、  
レーザ光のパワーが強くなりすぎて過熱し、黒文字  
ににじみが生じたりするという問題もあった。

【0008】本発明の目的は、上記従来技術の問題点を  
解消し、デジタルプリンタシステムのデジタルフォトブ  
リンクを用いて文字と画像とが合成されたプリント画像を  
持つポストカードを作成する場合であっても、文字を合  
成する背景画像の色味により、文字色が見えが影響され  
ず、特に赤味を帯びることなく、むしろ青味に仕上げる  
ことができるなど、背景画像の色味に對して、もしくは  
対して文字色が見えを調整できる文字と画像の合成方法  
を提供するにある。

【0009】

【課題を解決するための手段】上記目的を達成するため  
に、本発明は、文字と画像とが合成されたプリント画像  
を出力するためのデジタル合成画像データを生成するに  
際し、文字画像をビットマップ展開して得られた3原色  
デジタル文字画像データの各色の値を3原色背景画像背  
景画像データの各色の値に對して調整することを特徴と  
する文字と画像の合成方法を提供するものである。

【0010】ここで、前記3原色のデジタル文字画像デ  
ータの各色の値の調整は、前記各色の上限値および下限  
値の少なくとも一方を設定することにより行うのが好ま  
しい。また、前記3原色のデジタル文字画像データの各  
色の値の調整変換は、前記各色の設定された上限値およ  
び/または下限値で正規化する処理であるのが好まし  
い。

【0011】また、前記3原色のデジタル文字画像デー  
タの各色の値の調整変換は、前記デジタル文字画像デー  
タをnビットデータとし、前記デジタル文字画像デー

取った画像をデジタル信号とした後、種々の画像処理を  
施して記録用の画像情報とし、この画像情報に基いて変  
換した記録光によって印刷媒体の感光材料を走査露光し  
て画像 (増倍) を記録し、現像してプリントとするデジ  
タルプリンタシステムが提案され、このシステムを具体  
的に実施するデジタルフォトプリンタの開発が進んでい  
る。

【0005】デジタルプリンタシステムでは、複製画像  
の合成や画像の分割等の課題や文字と画像との編集等  
のプリント画像の編集、レイアウトや色/濃度調整、変  
倍率、輪郭調整等の各種の画像処理も自由に行うことが  
でき、用途に応じて自由に適用および画像処理した仕上  
りプリントを出力することができる。また、従来の直接  
露光によるプリントシステムでは、濃度分解能、空間分  
解能、色/濃度再現性等の点で、フィルム等に記録され  
ている画像の複製精度をすべて再生することはできない  
が、デジタルフォトプリンタによればフィルムに記録さ  
れている画像の複製精度をほぼ100%再生したプリント  
が出力可能である。デジタルフォトプリンタシステムや  
デジタルフォトプリンタは、基本的に、フィルム等の原  
稿に記録された画像をイメージセンサー等によって光電的  
に読み取る画像入力装置 (スキヤナ) で読み取られた文字  
やこの読み取った画像や文字との合成画像を表示す  
る表示装置 (ディスプレイ)、住所・氏名・自由文など  
の文字入力や様々な番号や条件を入力する入力装置を備  
え、システム全体を制御する制御装置、顧客の文字  
処理した、顧客の住所や住所、氏名等の文字  
画像を合成し、画像処理して画像処理装置、および画像  
処理された画像情報に基いて変換されたレーザ光などの  
露光ビームによって感光材料を走査露光して現像処理を  
施すプリントを得る画像出力装置より構成される。

【0006】このようなデジタルプリンタシステムによ  
れば、画像処理装置において、各フィルムに撮影され  
た画像、台紙画像 (テンプレート画像) などの定型画像お  
よびビットマップ展開された定型文などのデジタル画像  
データやその画像処理条件などをデジタルフォトプリン  
タが有するメモリ、例えばEEPROMやEPROMな  
どの不揮発性メモリからなる内部メモリやハード  
ディスク) などの外部メモリ、FD (フロッピーデー  
タ) やMO (光磁気記録媒体) などの記憶媒体に記憶  
し、保存しておくことが可能であるので、ポストカード  
等の作成時に定型画像や定型文を各条件毎に作成する必要  
がなく、またユーザーのフィルム原稿からの顧客画像とデ  
ジタル画像などの合成画像と住所・氏名・自由文や  
定型文などの文字画像との合成画像を表示装置に表示  
するので、修正や訂正を容易かつ正確に行うことができ、  
一旦合成画像データを作成すればレーザ光等を用いる画  
像出力装置で所望枚数連続して自動的にプリントを出力  
できるので、ポストカードの作成を容易かつ正確かつ効  
率よく行うことができる。

【0012】また、前記背景画像データの各色の値の調  
整変換は、前記各色の設定された上限値および/または  
下限値で正規化する処理であるのが好ましい。また、前  
記背景画像データの各色の値の調整変換は、前記背景画  
像データをnビットデータとし、前記背景画像データ  
のR、G、B各色の設定された上限値および下限値をそ  
れぞれI' maxおよびI' min ( $c=r, g, b$ ) とし、変  
換前の前記背景画像データの値をI ( $c=r, g, b$ ) とし、  
変換後の各色の文字画像データの値をI' ( $c=r, g, b$ ) と  
する時、下記式で表されるのが好ましい。

$$I' = (I'_{max} - I'_{min}) \times I / ((2^{n-1}) - 0) + I'_{min}$$

【0013】

【発明の図面の形態】 本発明に係る文字と画像の合成方  
法を添付の図面に示す好適実施例に基づいて以下に詳細  
に説明する。図1は、本発明の文字と画像の合成方法を  
実施するデジタルプリンタシステムの一実施例をブロッ  
ク図で示す概略図である。以下の説明においては、本発  
明の文字と画像の合成方法を行う対象として、顧客の展  
望画像と、年賀に因んだ絵柄を持つ背景画像と、年賀に  
因んだ「賀正」や「賀賀新年」などの定型文字や定型文  
や顧客の住所・氏名・自由文等の文字とを合成した年賀  
状などのポストカードを代表例としているが、本発明は  
これに限定されるものでなく、対象とする用途や主旨に  
応じて適宜選択可能なことは勿論である。

【0014】図1に示すデジタルプリンタシステム10  
は、顧客の持ち込んだフィルム原稿の相持画像を光電的  
に読み取る画像入力装置 (以下、スキヤナともいう) 1  
2と、スキヤナ12での読み取り条件の設定やこれに基  
づくスキヤナ12の制御、スキヤナ12で読み取られた  
画像信号のデジタル画像画像信号化およびその画像処理、こ  
のデジタル画像画像信号化した背景画像と顧客が指定した  
定型文字や定型文や顧客の住所・氏名・自由文等の文字  
との本発明法によるデジタル画像画像信号としての合成、合  
成されたデジタル合成画像信号の画像処理、台紙処理条  
件の設定および画像処理条件の自動設定 (オートセット  
アップ) などを行う制御装置14と、制御装置14で合

成処理されたデジタル合成画像信号に基づいて感光材料  
に画像露光し、現像処理して合成画像を相持するプリン  
トPを出力する画像出力装置 (以下、プリンタともい  
う) 16とし、スキヤナ12で読み取られた原稿画像や制  
御装置14で合成処理された合成画像を表示し、プリン  
タ16で出力される画像の傾斜 (仕上りプリント傾斜)  
を表示する画像表示装置 (以下、モニタともいう) 18  
と、予め用意されたポストカードPの目的に応じた背  
景画像、背景画像に合成される定型文字や入力された顧客  
の住所・氏名・自由文等の文字のビットマップ展開され  
た文字画像およびスキヤナ12で読み取られた原稿画像  
などの合成処理される前の各々のデジタル画像信号、ま  
たは制御装置14によって処理された、あるいはプリン  
タ16で用いられるデジタル合成画像信号、さらにはデ  
ジタル画像の合成処理条件や画像処理条件や露光条件や  
感光材料の処理条件などを記憶するサーバーやHDなど  
や、もしくはMO (光磁気記録媒体) あるいは磁気テー  
プやFDなどの磁気記録媒体とそのドライバから構成さ  
れる記憶装置20と、顧客の住所・氏名・自由文等の入  
力を行うためのキーボード22aやマウス22bなど  
のデータ入力装置22と、プリンタ16によって出力さ  
れた文字・画像合成プリントを年賀はがきや定型はがき  
などの台紙CRDに貼り付けてポストカードPを作成  
する貼付機24とを有する。

【0015】スキヤナ12は、フィルム原稿 (以下、単  
にフィルムという) 等に撮影された1コマの画像を光電  
的に読み取る装置で、光源26と、可変絞り27と、面  
像をR (赤)、G (緑) およびB (青) の三原色に分解  
するためのR、GおよびBの3枚の色フィルタを有し、  
回転して任意の色フィルタを光路に作用させる色フィル  
タ28と、フィルムに入射する露光光をフィルムの光  
軸に垂直な面方向で均一に拡散させる拡散ボックス30  
と、フィルムを各コマ毎に順次所定の駆動位置2に搬送  
するフィルムキャリア32 (以下、キャリア32とす  
る) と、駆動レベニョット34と、フィルムの1コマ  
の画像を読み取るエリアセンサであるCCDセンサ36  
と、アンプ (増幅器) 38とを有する。

【0016】このようなスキヤナ12においては、光原  
26から射出され、可変絞り27によって光量調整さ  
れ、色フィルタ28を通して色調整され、拡散ボッ  
クス30で拡散された露光光が、キャリア32によつて  
光軸Rに対応する駆動位置2に位置されたフィルムの1  
コマの画像に入射し、透過することにより、フィルムに  
撮影されたこの1コマの画像を相持する投影光が得られ  
る。また、図示例のデジタルプリンタシステム (以下、  
単にプリンタシステムという) 10においては、キャリ  
ア32は、スキヤナ12の本体の所定位置に装着自在に  
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タのR、G、B各色の設定された上限値および下限値を、  
それぞれMmaxおよびMmin ( $c=r, g, b$ ) とし、  
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れるのが好ましい。

$$M' = (M_{max} - M_{min}) \times M / ((2^{n-1}) - 0) + M_{min}$$

また、前記文字が黒文字の場合、この文字と合成される  
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$$I' = (I'_{max} - I'_{min}) \times I / ((2^{n-1}) - 0) + I'_{min}$$

【0013】

ータ(デハイス依存画像データ)に変換され、D/A変換器51においてデジタル画像データ信号からアナログ画像データ信号に変換されて、モニタ18に出力され、こうして得られたアナログ画像データ信号に基づいて文字と画像が合成された画像がモニタ18に表示される。

【0026】CPU40は、本発明の文字と画像の合成方法を行う画像処理部15の制御を始め、スキャナ12、制御装置14自体およびプリンタ16等のプリントシステム10の制御や管理を行うもので、具体的には、スキャナ12での読み取り条件の設定やこれに基づくスキャナ12の制御、スキャナ12で読み取られた画像データのデジタル画像信号化およびその画像処理、この画像と顧客が指定した背景画像と顧客が指定した定型文字や定型文や顧客の住所・氏名・自由文等の文字との本発明法によるデジタル画像信号としての合成、合成されたデジタル合成画像データの画像処理、合成処理条件の設定および画像処理条件の自動設定(オートセレクト)や管理を行う。メモリ42は、プリントシステム10を動作するための必要な制御データや合成画像データなどを記憶するためのメモリで、CPU40が、上述した種々の制御や管理を行う際に参照される。なお、これらのデータの少なくとも一部を記憶装置20に記憶させておき、CPU40が、その際に参照し、記憶装置20を参照するように構成してもよい。制御装置14は、基本的に以上のように構成される。

【0027】上述したように、制御装置14で合成処理された文字と画像とのデジタル合成画像データは、プリンタ16に出力される。プリンタ16は、制御装置14で合成処理されたデジタル合成画像データ信号に基づいて感光材料に画像露光し、現像処理して再生画像を担持するプリンタPを出力するものである。

【0028】図3に、プリンタ16の一実施例の概略図を示す。図3に示すように、プリンタ16は、露光制御装置56、露光部58および現像部60を有する。制御装置14から出力された合成画像データは、露光制御装置56に送られ、露光制御装置56は、合成画像データを、プリンタ16の画像形成方式に応じた解像度および形式の画像データ(デハイス依存画像データ)、例えばデジタルRGB画像データ信号に変換した後、得られたデジタルRGB画像データ信号からアナログRGB画像データ信号にD/A変換して、このアナログRGB画像データ信号に応じて光ビームを駆動するように、画像露光部58の露光光路を駆動する。

【0029】露光部58は、光ビーム走査によって感光材料2を走査露光して、前記画像データの画像を感光材料Aに露光するもので、感光材料AのR露光路の露光に対応する光ビームを射出する光源62R、以下同様にして、対応する光ビームを射出する光源62B、62G、62Cを駆動する。

【0030】図4は、本発明の文字と画像の合成方法を実施する部分の1つであって、画像加工処理部48から出力される画像データと、文字画像データ生成部52から出力されるビットマップ文字画像データと、背景画像および文字のビットマップ画像データとを合成するものである。合成処理部50および文字画像データ生成部52で実施される本発明の文字と画像の合成方法は、画像加工処理部48から出力される画像データが、デジタルRGB画像データ信号からアナログRGB画像データ信号にD/A変換して、このアナログRGB画像データ信号に応じて光ビームを駆動するように、画像露光部58の露光光路を駆動する。

明の文字と画像の合成方法を実施する部分の1つであって、キーボード22からCPU40やメモリ42を介して入力された顧客の住所・氏名・自由文等の文字データをビットマップ展開してビットマップ画像データを生じ、これをメモリ42に記憶する。また、背景画像メモリ54は、プリントシステム10に搭載されたカードの用途に応じて予め用意されている背景画像の背景画像(テンプレート画像または右側画像)のデジタル画像データや、顧客が指定した定型文字や定型文のビットマップ画像データを記憶(格納)するもので、これらの背景画像データや定型文字や定型文のビットマップ画像データは、オペレータがデータ入力装置22で指定することにより、CPU40によって背景画像メモリ54から読み出せるようになっている。なお、フレームメモリ46は、制御装置14内に内蔵されているメモリで、記憶装置20の一部に割り当てられるものである。

【0024】なお、これらの背景画像や定型文字や定型文は、複製装置の内蔵メモリに格納されている。ここで、オペレータは、複製装置の内蔵メモリに格納されている背景画像や定型文字や定型文の指定は、背景画像メモリ54に記憶された複製装置の複製画像データや定型文字や定型文の文字フォントなどのコード番号などの指定番号をモニタ18に表示し、モニタ18に指定された指定番号の中から、顧客が注文時に選択した背景画像や定型文字や定型文の指定番号をマウス22bによって指定するようにしてもよいし、もしくは、それらの背景画像や定型文字や定型文の指定番号をキーボード22aで入力するようにしてもよい。背景画像メモリ54には、予め用意されている背景画像や文字や文そのフォント等について、例えばフォントジョブ(Adobe社製)などのレクタブルソフト等を用いて作成し、画像データやビットマップ展開データに変換して、新たに追加できるようにしておくのが好ましい。

【0025】合成処理部50は、本発明の文字と画像の合成方法を実施する部分の1つであって、画像加工処理部48から出力される画像データと、文字画像データ生成部52から出力されるビットマップ文字画像データと、背景画像および文字のビットマップ画像データとを合成するものである。合成処理部50および文字画像データ生成部52で実施される本発明の文字と画像の合成方法は、画像加工処理部48から出力される画像データが、デジタルRGB画像データ信号からアナログRGB画像データ信号にD/A変換して、このアナログRGB画像データ信号に応じて光ビームを駆動するように、画像露光部58の露光光路を駆動する。

タ生成部52および背景画像(テンプレート画像)メモリ54を有する。ここで、A/D変換器43は、スキャナ12から出力されたR、GおよびBの各画像データ44を、それぞれデジタル画像データとする。前記処理部44は、得られたデジタル画像データに、必要に応じてDCオフセット補正、暗部補正、L<sub>0</sub>変換、シェーディング補正、ネガ/ポジ変換等の各種の処理・補正処理を施すものである。露光制御装置56は、制御装置14から出力されたデジタル画像データを記憶(格納)するもので、この前記画像データや定型文字や定型文のビットマップ画像データを記憶(格納)する。メモリ42は、本発明の文字と画像の合成方法を実施する部分の1つであって、画像加工処理部48から出力される画像データと、文字画像データ生成部52から出力されるビットマップ文字画像データと、背景画像および文字のビットマップ画像データとを合成するものである。合成処理部50および文字画像データ生成部52で実施される本発明の文字と画像の合成方法は、画像加工処理部48から出力される画像データが、デジタルRGB画像データ信号からアナログRGB画像データ信号にD/A変換して、このアナログRGB画像データ信号に応じて光ビームを駆動するように、画像露光部58の露光光路を駆動する。

【0022】このようにして、スキャナ12で読み取られた画像データは、制御装置14に出力される。図2に、制御装置14の一実施例を示すブロック図が示される。図2に示すように、制御装置14は、本発明の文字と画像との合成方法を実施するためのデジタル合成画像データの生成と、このデジタル合成画像データの画像処理とを行う。メモリ42は、プリントシステム10を動作するための必要な制御データや合成画像データなどを記憶するためのメモリで、CPU40が、上述した種々の制御や管理を行う際に参照される。なお、これらのデータの少なくとも一部を記憶装置20に記憶させておき、CPU40が、その際に参照し、記憶装置20を参照するように構成してもよい。制御装置14は、基本的に以上のように構成される。

【0023】一方、文字画像データ生成部52は、本発明の文字と画像の合成方法を実施する部分の1つであって、画像加工処理部48から出力される画像データと、文字画像データ生成部52から出力されるビットマップ文字画像データと、背景画像および文字のビットマップ画像データとを合成するものである。合成処理部50および文字画像データ生成部52で実施される本発明の文字と画像の合成方法は、画像加工処理部48から出力される画像データが、デジタルRGB画像データ信号からアナログRGB画像データ信号にD/A変換して、このアナログRGB画像データ信号に応じて光ビームを駆動するように、画像露光部58の露光光路を駆動する。

ズ、スライダ等のフィルムの形態、トリミング等の処理等に応じて、スキャナ12の本体に装着自在な専用のキャリアが容易に取り付けられ、遊着するキャリアを取り替えることにより、従来の135サイズや240サイズのネガがデジタルフィルム、リバーサルフィルム、スライダ等の各種のフィルムや処理に対応して読み取りを行うことができる。

【0017】フィルムの露光光は、縦横レンズユニット34によってCCDセンサ36の受光面に結像され、CCDセンサ36によって光電的に読み取られ、その出力信号がアンプ38で増幅されて、制御装置14に送られる。CCDセンサ36は、例えば、1380×920画素のエリアCCDセンサである。また、図示例の装置では、CCDセンサ36は、半面露光に対応する画素だけ画素配列方向に二次元的に移動可能に構成されており、これにより、露光面積を見掛け上4倍まで増やすことができる。

【0018】スキャナ12においては、このような画像露光を、色フィルム板28の各色フィルムを順次挿入して3回行うことにより、1コマの画像をR、GおよびBの3原色に分解して読み取る。ここで、プリントシステム10においては、文字合成画像プリンタPを出力するための画像露光(本発明)に先立ち、文字と読み取られた画像との合成結果を調整するため、および合成画像の露光条件を調整するため、その画像露光条件等を決定する。従って、CCDセンサ36によって読み取られる、1コマの画像について少なくとも合計6回読み取られる。









いて詳細に説明したが、本発明は上記実施例に限定はされず、例えば、顧客の住所・氏名・自由文などの文字データはすでにF Dなどの記憶媒体に格納された文字データをを用いてもよいし、顧客原稿画像や顧客原稿の読み取り画像は、すでに原稿から読み取られて、またはコンピュータなどで生成されて、F D、H D、M Oなどの画像記憶媒体に格納された画像データを用いてもよいなど、本発明の要旨を逸脱しない範囲において、種々の改良および変形を行ってもよいのはもちろんである。

[0067]

[発明の効果] 以上述べたように、本発明によれば、文字を合成する背景画像の色味により、文字色が見えが影響されず、顧客の好みに応じた文字の見えが実現され、例えば色味を帯びることなく、むしろ青味に仕上げられ、背景画像の色味に対して文字色が見えが調整された合成プリント画像を出力することができる。

[図面の簡単な説明]

[図1] 本発明に係る文字と画像の合成方法を実施するデジタルプリントシステムの一実施例のブロック図である。

[図2] 図1に示すデジタルプリントシステムの制御装置の一実施例のブロック図である。

[図3] 図1に示すデジタルプリントシステムの画像出力装置の一実施例の構成断面図である。

[図4] 本発明の文字と画像の合成方法の一実施例の流れ(フロー)を示す説明図である。

[図5] 図4に示す文字と画像の合成方法における文字生成から文字画像合成までの文字加工処理の一実施例の流れ(フロー)を示す説明図である。

[図6] 図4に示す文字と画像の合成方法における文字生成から文字画像合成までの文字加工処理の別の実施例の流れ(フロー)を示す説明図である。

[図7] (a) および (b) は、それぞれ図5および図6に示される文字加工処理の各変換工程の変換関数の一例を示すグラフである。

[図8] (a) および (b) は、それぞれ図5および

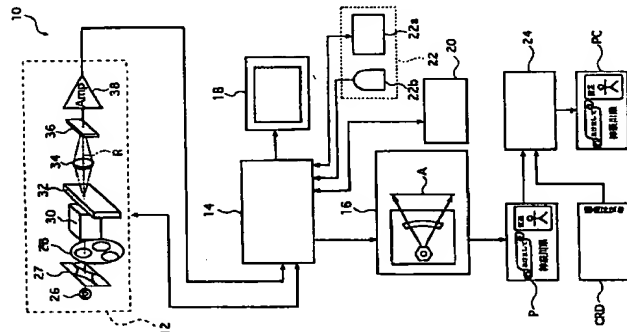
図6に示される文字加工処理のアンチエイリアス処理を説明するための説明図である。

[図9] 図5および図6に示される文字加工処理の二つの変換工程に用いられる変換テーブルの一例を示す図である。

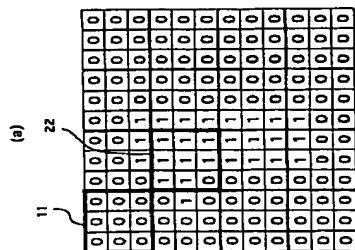
[符号の説明]

- 10 デジタルプリントシステム
- 12 画像入力装置
- 14 制御装置
- 15 画像処理部
- 16 画像出力装置
- 18 表示装置 (ディスプレイモニタ)
- 20 記憶装置
- 22 データ入力装置
- 22a キーボード
- 22b マウス
- 24 脱付機
- 40 CPU
- 42 メモリ
- 44 画像前処理部
- 46, 46a, 46b フレームメモリ
- 48 画像加工処理部
- 50 合成処理部
- 52 文字画像データ生成部
- 54 背景画像 (テンプレート画像) メモリ
- Amd 特定領域
- Amtd 画像領域 (画像窓)
- Amw 非画像領域
- It p 台紙画像 (背景画像、テンプレート画像)
- It pc 組込定型画像
- Im マスク画像
- Is スキヤン (顧客) 画像
- Ii 中間合成画像
- Mc 文字画像
- P プリント画像
- CRD 裁断 (台紙)
- PC ポストカード

[図1]



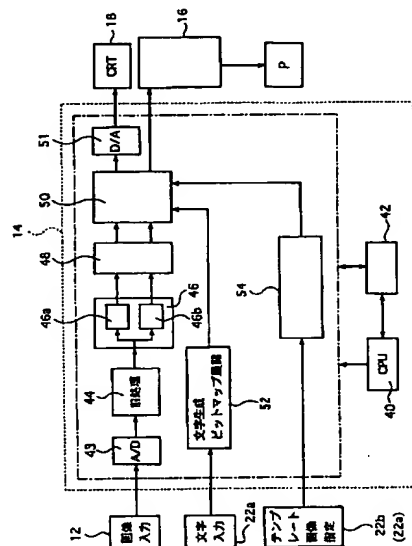
[図7]



(b)

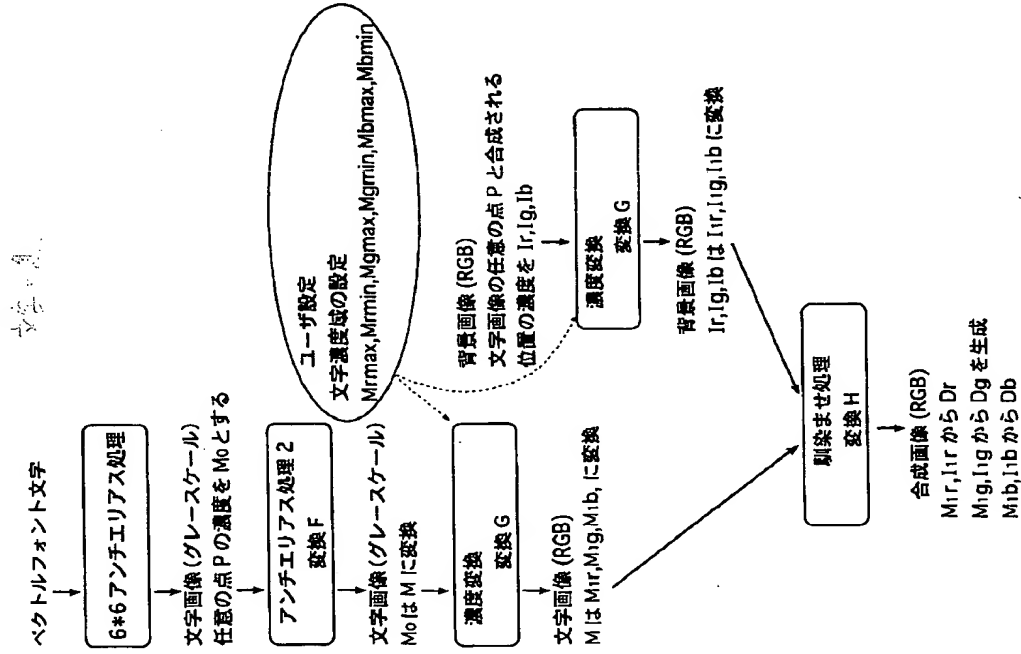
255	200	226	255
226	28	170	255
255	85	170	255
255	200	226	255

[図2]





【図5】



【図6】

